

HOW TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE GODLY WISDOM, PART 2

James 3:13-18

¹³Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. ¹⁵This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. ¹⁸And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Theme: There are two kinds of wisdom:

- (1) A wisdom from above (_____ wisdom)
- (2) A wisdom not from above (_____ wisdom)

1 The _____ of godly wisdom

v. 13a - *Who among you is wise and understanding?*

- Presuppositions behind this question:
 - (1) Wisdom should be desired by every Christian
 - (2) Wisdom is essential to the Christian life
- The importance and value of godly wisdom is emphasized in the both the OT (in the 5 books of Wisdom Literature—Job, Ps., Pr., Ec., and SS) and in the NT (Lu. 2:52; Ac. 6:3, 10; Ro. 16:19; Co. 1:28; 4:5; Ep. 5:15)

2 The _____ of godly wisdom

wise = *sophos* (Greek)

wisdom = *sophia* (Greek)

- Three basic elements of biblical wisdom:
 - (1) _____ God
 - Proverbs 1:7 - *The fear of the Lord is beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom...*
 - (2) Understanding God's _____
 - Psalms 107:43 - *Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things, and consider the lovingkindnesses of the Lord.*
 - (3) Having the practical skill to apply God's ways and God's Word to _____
 - Psalms 111:10 - *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who do His commandments.*
 - Proverbs 8:13 - *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth, I hate.*

3 The _____ of godly wisdom

- (1) Through a saving knowledge of _____
 - 1 Corinthians 1:24 - *to those who are called...Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.*
- (2) Through a thorough knowledge of God's _____
 - Psalms 19:7b - *The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.*
 - Psalms 119:98 - *Your commandments make me wise*
- (3) Through the influence of wise _____
 - Proverbs 13:20 - *He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.*
- (4) Through _____
 - Ephesians 1:17 - *[I pray] that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ...may give to you a spirit of wisdom...*
 - James 1:5 - *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God...and it will be given to him.*

v. 13a - Who among you is wise and understanding?

Q: To whom is James directing these verses (3:13-18)?

A1: In 1:1, his letter is addressed to “the _____ (Jews) who are disbursed abroad. Consider it all joy, my brethren...”

A2: In 3:1, he said: “Let not many of you become _____”

A3: In 3:1-12, he initially addressed teachers but then addressed all _____ believers

Conclusion: In 3:13-18, James is addressing _____ in the church

By his question, James is implying that it is relatively easy to deceive ourselves into thinking we have godly wisdom. Why? Because we are a product of the _____ and _____ in which we live. Therefore, we should examine ourselves by the following test to see if we really do have godly wisdom.

4 The _____ of godly wisdom

v. 13b - Let him show by his good behavior his deeds...

“to prove”
“to provide evidence”

“way of life”

“doer of the Word”

“good works”

ergon (1:25; 2:14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26)

obedience (actions/attitudes that the Bible commands)

- **Summary:** If we have godly wisdom, our life will be _____ by obedience to God’s Word
- Edmond Hiebert - “James demands that the possession of wisdom, like faith (2:14-26), must be proved by conduct.”
- Robert Johnstone - “We have here again what may be described as the central thought of this epistle, that where religion has [a] real saving hold of a mind and heart, it cannot from its nature but powerfully influence the outward life.”
 - In other words, if we have really been changed on the inside, then it's going to express itself in how we act. And so, the more wisdom we have, the more it will be reflected in in every area of our life.

...in the gentleness of wisdom.

gentleness (NASB)
meekness (ESV, NIV)
humility (NKJV)

- Numbers 12:3 - (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.)
- Matthew 11:29 - I (Jesus) am gentle and humble in heart.
- Matthew 5:5 - Blessed are the gentle

- Gentleness is manifested in two different ways:

(1) Toward _____ (in _____ or meekness)

- A calm _____ of our circumstances as from God for our good, and a refusal to _____ or whine about those circumstances.
- This is an acknowledgement that God is _____, and a submission to His _____ in our life
- Douglas Moo - *“This virtue comes from understanding our position as sinful creatures in relationship to the glorious and majestic God. It recognizes how unable we are in and of ourselves to chart our own course in the world. This virtue flows out of the conviction that God is sovereign over everything that happens in life and that He is at the same time both wise and good.”*
- Psalm 131 - *O LORD, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty; Nor do I involve myself in great matters, nor in things too difficult for me. Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; like a weaned child rests against his mother, my soul is like a weaned child within me. O Israel, hope in the LORD, from this time forth and forever.*

(2) Toward other _____

- Galatians 6:1 - *If anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness*
- Ephesians 4:1 - *Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*
- Colossians 3:12 - *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, of kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*
- Titus 3:1-2 - *Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.*
- If we have genuine wisdom, (if we truly fear God, understand His ways, and trying to apply His Word to our life), then we will be characterized by gentleness:
 - a submission to the will and purpose of God
 - a humble gentleness toward others
- Galatians 5:22-23 - *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.*

5 A description of _____ wisdom

vv. 14-16 - ¹⁴*But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.* ¹⁵*This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.* ¹⁶*For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.*

- Psalm 1:1 - *How blessed is the man who does not walk in the council of the wicked...*
- There are only two kinds of wisdom:
 - (1) The wisdom of God
 - (2) The wisdom of the world
 - 1 Corinthians 1:20-21 - ²⁰*Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?* ²¹*For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.*
 - 1 Corinthians 2:6, 13 - ⁶*We do not speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom...* ¹³*we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but those taught by the Spirit.*
 - James 3:17 - *...the wisdom from above.* James 3:15 - *This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.*
 - earthly =
 - natural =
 - demonic =

Q: What does worldly, human, devilish wisdom look like?

A: Every thought, every attitude, every word, every act that is _____ to God.

- 1 Corinthians 3:19 - *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God.*
- Romans 12:2 - *Do not be conformed to this world*

The worldly wisdom of our day (Al Mohler in “Preaching the Cross”):

- **Self-fulfillment:** A culture that prioritizes personal satisfaction and happiness, evident in the popularity of self-help resources.
- **Self-sufficiency:** Emphasis on individual independence and achievement, sometimes to the point of neglecting reliance on God or others.
- **Self-definition:** The idea that individuals can determine their own identity and meaning, including aspects like gender and humanity.
- **Self-absorption:** A focus on oneself, leading to isolation and prioritizing personal needs over relationships and community.
- **Self-transcendence:** Individuals crafting their own spirituality by picking and choosing elements from different religions, believing they can define and dictate their own spiritual reality.
- **Self-enhancement:** The idea that individuals can improve themselves beyond what they were created to be, exemplified by cosmetic procedures and advancements in technology.
- **Self-security:** A sense of confidence in one's own safety and well-being, often leading to a lack of awareness of potential dangers or the need for a higher power.